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## CRITICAL NOTES

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### JOHN THE BAPTIST IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Since 1898, when Professor Wilhelm Baldensperger, of Giessen, published his *Prolog des vierten Evangeliums*, all studies of the Fourth Gospel have had to take some account of the thesis there argued, the thesis, namely, that that Gospel is dominated by a "polemic-apologetic" attitude toward the followers of John the Baptist. New Testament scholars have in general been disposed to think that Baldensperger carried much too far his theory of *Tendenz*, and to deny the existence of such a Baptist sect, at least in the numbers and importance demanded by his theory. The following observations would merely raise the question of the bearing of certain New Testament *data* concerning the man who, after Jesus, Peter, and Paul, is most frequently mentioned in its pages.

The witness of the first two Synoptics we can state in brief, turning then to that of Luke, more interesting and significant. Mark and Matthew make it clear that there was a very striking likeness or analogy between the mission of Jesus and that of John, so striking that by their contemporaries they were sometimes identified (Mark 8:27 f.; 6:14-16). They received alike the title "prophet" from their followers (Mark 11:32; 8:28; Matt. 21:11) and "devil possessed" from their enemies (Matt. 11:18; Mark 3:22, 30). Their messages had similar content (Mark 1:15; Matt. 4:17; 3:2); both led to repentance and preparation to enter the kingdom of God (Matt. 21:31 f.). Jesus was very clearly conscious of this parallelism and gave it clear statement; he further praised John in exalted terms (Matt. 11:9-14). John had a definite group of "disciples" (Mark 2:18), and there are distinct indications that his following persisted, an ascetic movement, given to fasting and ablution.

The Gospel of Luke, roughly contemporary with that of Matthew, confirms the suggestions of the other Synoptics. Passing over for the moment the birth-stories of chaps. 1 and 2, we examine the synoptic part of the narrative. The first verses of chap. 3 give an elaborately calculated date. By a series of synchronisms the year (apparently 29 A.D.) is established in which—the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness! Every reader is conscious of a start of surprise; the careful dating creates the expectation that the long-delayed principal clause is to offer a statement about Jesus. On the contrary,

its statement is about John, as is the entire lengthy passage to vs. 20, which brings the Baptist's story down to the point where he rests in Herod's prison.

With vs. 21 Jesus first appears, but without introduction or explanation, in a most indirect and abrupt fashion, in a participial clause, "Jesus having been baptized." There is no account of the baptism or even direct statement of it, but only this backward reference by means of an aorist participle, as to a past event. Jesus is engaged in prayer (*προσευχόμενον*); how long subsequent to his baptism this is there is no indication. It is only our memory of Mark 1:10 ("straightway coming up out of the water") that makes us assume that Luke intends the one experience as immediately consequent upon the other. This is an awkward introduction of the chief person of the narrative.

Awkward, too, is the position of the genealogy that follows, finishing the chapter. Aside from these two ill-placed elements, the entire third chapter deals with John. It gives a date for the beginning of his work, though it gives none for the beginning of Jesus' work. There is no indication of the length of time that separates vs. 2 from vs. 21, especially since vs. 21 is an awkward going back to a period prior to vs. 20, when John's career is already closed by imprisonment. Vs. 21 really belongs chronologically between vss. 17 and 18. Why does not Luke so place it? The answer may be suggested by a further question. What would be the result of so placing it? To this the reply is obvious: it would destroy the clear and close connection between vss. 17 and 18, *a connection which existed antecedent to the statement of Jesus' baptism, and independent of it.*

In other words, the whole passage 3:1-20 belongs to a narrative dealing with John which originally had nothing in it about Jesus. To this narrative, of which Luke avails himself here, as fuller and more satisfactory than Mark 1:1-8, he adapts his own brief statement, not of the baptism, but of the messianic attestation which followed it. Luke is really as little concerned as the Fourth Evangelist to state, as a positive *datum* of his narrative, that Jesus was baptized by the forerunner; the mention of the baptism serves only to indicate the time of the messianic attestation. It is perhaps worth noting that as Matthew (3:13) separates the baptism of Jesus from that of the crowd (3:5), so Luke places it "when all the people were baptized," i.e., as a separate scene, subsequent to the baptism of the multitude.

The Johannine passage in Luke, chap. 3 we may now briefly examine. After the elaborate dating comes the statement: "The word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness." The latter phrases

connect this passage with chap. 1 (vss. 5, 80); the former characterizes John as a prophet. "The word of the Lord came" to Elijah (I Kings 17:2, etc.), to Jeremiah (1:2), to Ezekiel (6:1, etc.), to Hosea (1:1, etc.), to Jonah (1:1, etc.), to Micah (1:1, etc.), to Zephaniah (1:1), to Haggai (1:1, etc.), to Zechariah (1:1, etc.). The Baptist is here in august company. He came himself prophesied by Isaiah; here Luke uses the suggestion of Mark (1:3) in quoting Isa. 40:3, but adds the following sentences of the prophecy, with the significant promise, "All flesh shall see the salvation of God." Luke's vss. 7 to 9 may be *Logia* material, since they are paralleled in Matthew (3:7-10), but vss. 10 to 14 are from a source not followed by Matthew, giving fuller statement of the Baptist's preaching than is elsewhere offered.

Vs. 15 is also peculiar to Luke. It represents all John's hearers as raised to such a pitch of expectation that they were considering whether or no he were Messiah. There is no suggestion, save in Luke and the Fourth Gospel, that the question of John's Messiahship was raised during his lifetime. Indeed, all that we know of his work and its results renders it certain that he was not so thought of, either by himself or anyone else, while he lived. Luke does not, however, invent the suggestion without external instigation. In his time there are those who give John the messianic title, a claim Luke is concerned to indicate as erroneous. There is no active polemic; he simply inserts before John's reference to the coming Mightier One (taken from Mark) this statement of the question whether John were Messiah. John's words are its sufficient answer. John 1:19-27 is only Luke 3:15 f. more fully and explicitly written.

Vs. 18 is noteworthy for the word it uses to describe John's preaching. It is *εὐγγελίζετο*, "he was evangelizing, preaching the gospel." This word very soon became the technical expression for the proclamation of the Christian "gospel." Only in Luke 1:19 (2:10?) and I Thess. 3:6 is it used by New Testament writers in any other sense, least of all when used absolutely, as here.

We are at once reminded of another Lukan passage, Acts 19:1. Here Paul finds certain "disciples" in Ephesus, and asks, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" The word "disciple," used absolutely, always means in Christian speech a follower of Jesus, just as "believe" means "become a Christian." This usage of *μαθητής* is especially marked in Acts, the word being used 29 times, always absolutely (except 9:1, *μαθητὰς τοῦ κυρίου*) as a simple synonym for "Christian." Yet these men in Ephesus are not Christians at all, but "Baptists." Paul

assumes that they have been baptized, i.e., he assumes that they belong to a religious fellowship at least partially analogous to his own. They are "disciples" who "believed" and "were baptized." But their baptism was only that of John. They need to be rebaptized, this time into the name of Jesus; then, with the laying on of Paul's hands, comes the Holy Spirit, with the gifts of tongues and prophesying. Luke's description shows these "Baptist" believers as in large measure the parallel of the Christians, so that the same terms can be used of either. No impassable gulf divides them; the passage from one fold to the other is normal and easy.

Similar observations may be made in Acts 18:24-26. Apollos, an Alexandrian Jew, comes to Ephesus. Like the twelve "disciples," he knows the baptism of John. He is a missionary, apparently coming to Ephesus to make propaganda for his new religious movement. Fervent in spirit, he begins to speak boldly in the synagogue. His discourse is described, "He was instructed [κατηχημένος, having been a catechumen] in the way of the Lord"; this is language whose natural meaning is that Apollos had had Christian teaching. "The way of the Lord" means the way of the Christian gospel; ὁ κύριος is for Luke, as for Paul, the Christians' Master.<sup>1</sup> Further, "he was speaking and teaching carefully the things about Jesus"; this language is explicit. And yet Luke does not mean to represent Apollos as a Christian; on the contrary, it is immediately added that he was not that, "knowing only the baptism of John." He must have the way of God expounded to him more carefully by Priscilla and Aquila before he becomes a Christian.

Here then, too, Luke, in speaking of a Baptist, uses language properly appropriate to statements concerning a Christian. "Taught in the way of the Lord" means for him taught concerning the kingdom of God and the means of preparing for its advent. "The things about Jesus" are all those things about the person and work of Messiah which, in the utterances of Christian teachers, have application to Jesus. The significant thing is that for Luke the two movements are so largely parallel that he can thus use the same terms indifferently for either.

Important, too, if the incident is to be regarded as historical at all, is the fact that followers of John are extant as a group separate from the Christians, 25 years after John and Jesus are dead, and that this Johanne movement is making propaganda outside of Palestine. Apparently

<sup>1</sup> If the W.H. marginal reading *κυρίου*, without the article, were adopted, the case would of course be different; we should have "the way of Jahweh." This anarthous *κύριος* = Jahweh is frequent in Luke.

it has been preached in Alexandria, has won converts there, one of whom comes to Ephesus to carry on further missionary activity. Whether the twelve "disciples" are converts of Apollos or independent of him does not appear. They may have been won before his arrival or after his departure. If they had been Apollos' own converts, he would probably have tried to make Christians of them after his own conversion. But that a group of Baptists is met in Ephesus prior to the year 60 is significant; the one place where such a group is met is the one place where Baldensperger's thesis requires them to be.<sup>2</sup> It is probable that Luke knew of Baptists there in his own time; the story of the conversion of the Twelve is not significant enough in itself to be preserved unless it had some point of contact in the circumstances of the evangelist's environment. Whether these Ephesian Baptists of the year 55 preached John as Messiah is doubtful; if they did, their preaching would be an even closer parallel of "the Jesus-things." That he was so preached in Luke's time we have already seen to be probable.

Returning to Luke's Gospel, we note in 5:33 the statement concerning the fasting of John's disciples. Luke does not merely reproduce Mark's statement: they fast, like the Pharisees. He emphasizes it, and adds to it. "They fast *often, and make prayers*." The latter phrase, as Plummer *ad loc.* says, "refers to prayers at fixed times according to rule." Luke adds this item, assuredly, because it corresponds to the practice of Baptists known to him in his own time. None of his sources has it, nor is it mentioned by any other early writer. But Luke's personal knowledge of the matter is evidenced again in 11:1, where Jesus' disciples request of him, "Master, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples." Luke would seem to attest, then, the Baptists of his time as frequent (*πυκνά*) fasters, and as using stated forms of prayer derived from their Master.

In 7:18 Luke has a reference to the disciples of John; they tell their imprisoned master of the work of Jesus. The parallel in Matthew has only "John hearing in the prison," etc. So the following sentence is more specific in Luke: "And calling certain two of his disciples to him, John sent them," etc., where Matthew has only "sending through his disciples." Luke has a more vivid consciousness of the existence of such disciples; in the later context 7:29 f. is peculiar to his account. "And all the people, and the tax-gatherers, hearing, glorified God, for

<sup>2</sup> W. Brandt, "Die jüdischen Baptisten" (*Beihefte zur Z.A.T.W.*, 18), 1910, pp. 81 f., 146, argues that the Baptists in Acts, chaps. 18 and 19, are a fiction of the author that such a group or party never existed.

they had been baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and the scribes rejected for themselves the counsel of God, not being baptized by him." Luke knows a numerous and popular following. In 20:6 the Sanhedrists are unwilling to assign an earthly origin to John's mission, for "all the people will stone us, for they are convinced that John was a prophet." That puts the situation stronger than Mark or Matthew does.

That John looms large in Luke's consciousness is further evident from the nine mentions of him in the Acts. Of these the most notable for our purpose is 13:25. "As John was fulfilling his course, he said: What suppose ye that I am? I am not he. But behold there cometh one after me, the shoes of whose feet I am not worthy to unloose." There, in brief, is the whole insistence of the Fourth Gospel.

We may now turn to the first chapter of Luke which gives more attention to John than any other New Testament passage. Here we have a detailed account of the circumstances attending the birth and infancy of the Baptist, into which there has been woven a parallel account (vss. 24-56) of the infancy of Jesus. This birth-story of the Baptist is told with so much circumstantial detail, with so much loving reverence, with such full claim of divine participation in its events, that it must originally have been written by one who valued the Baptist for his own sake, as one sent from God to be the guide of men. Many of the details of the account are quite without specific relation to the purpose of the synoptic writers (including Luke) in noting the work of John at the beginning of the gospel. These details had value in themselves, for the story of John, before that story was used as the prelude to the story of Jesus.

This part of Luke's Gospel, like the completer account of John in chap. 3, was taken from a source foreign to Mark and Matthew. The conclusion seems natural that this source was a Baptist document, a primitive Baptist gospel, whose extent we do not know, but which contained a birth-story. And this at a time before Luke was written, and so almost certainly before Matthew was written, that is, before there was, *so far as we know*, a Christian gospel with a birth-story. Of course, among the "many" narratives used by Luke there may have been one including a gospel of the infancy (the material of chap. 2?), but there is no positive indication of such. That there should be a Baptist gospel at the end of the century is far from improbable; the movement somewhat antedated that of Jesus, which had possessed written transcripts of the gospel for at least thirty or forty years when Luke wrote.

In the *Expository Times* for January, 1910 (Vol. XXI, pp. 173-75), Rev. J. C. Todd argued convincingly that the passages in Luke, chap. 3, which go beyond the parallel in Mark are derived from written "Logia of John," prepared and used by the Baptists. This document, thinks Mr. Todd, "probably antedated, and possibly suggested, the 'Logia of Jesus.'" It was, he holds, known also to the evangelist Matthew, and used by him in that part of the Baptist's story in which Luke and Matthew agree against Mark, a passage wrongly assigned, therefore, by most critics to the "Logia of Jesus." Apollos and his fellow-Baptists in Ephesus might quite conceivably have known this document. Whatever its date, the existence of the work seems too clearly indicated to be problematic.

That the Johannine portion of the first chapter of Luke comes from the same document is the inevitable suggestion as soon as it becomes probable that Luke used a Johannine source at all. Professor D. Völter of Amsterdam published in the *Theologisch Tijdschrift*, Vol. XXX (1896), pp. 244-69, an argument that the substance of Luke, chap. 1, formed a Baptist document, which he called "The Apocalypse of Zacharias." The name is not well chosen, and certain of Völter's conclusions seem not well taken, but in the main his contention is sound, that the account of the Baptist's infancy was originally written, not by a Christian, but by a Baptist.<sup>3</sup> This being equally true of a large part of chap. 3, it is probable that the same source was used in both chapters, and we may identify Mr. Todd's "Logia of John" with Professor Völter's "Apocalypse of Zacharias."

Nor is there anything extraordinary in Luke's using such a source. Among his "many" sources, since he was concerned to tell of the Baptist as the Precursor, why should he not make use of the document that gave him fullest account of John? We have already seen that he did not draw the sharp line of distinction between "Baptist" and "Christian" which later writers drew. In his time the two movements were not so far apart as they afterwards became; as Baldensperger points out (p. 106), the name *χριστιανοί*, messianists, could at first be applied with equal right to either group. So long as Christianity remained in close connection with Judaism, or presented to a gentile observer primarily a Jewish aspect, the external differences between the two cannot have been so striking. Brandt, who does not believe in the existence of the "Baptists," says (*Die jüdischen Baptismen*, p. 122),

<sup>3</sup> Wilkinson, *A Johannine Document in the First Chapter of St. Luke's Gospel*, I have not seen.



"Non-Pauline Christianity in the Orient *ca.* the year 100 of our era must have resembled a baptist Jewish sect."

For Brandt, then, the Baptists are merely baptizing Christians, and the Fourth Evangelist directs his argument against Christians. "The Johannine writings of the New Testament—Gospel and First Epistle—attest by their polemic the existence of a strong Christian party to whom water served as the single sacramental element of salvation" (p. 121). For Bishop Lightfoot, on the other hand, the Baptists are ascetic Jews, who deliberately, some time in the first century, feigned a fictitious connection with John. From these Jews comes the famous fourth book of the Sibylline Oracles (*ca.* 80 A.D.), and against them, a little later, is directed the polemic of the Fourth Gospel (*Colossians*, pp. 402 f.). Against these views the evidence of the New Testament data seems decisive for genuine Baptists and a Baptist gospel.

Looking now at Luke, chap. 1 in some detail, we may inquire what position it assigns to John. The details of his parentage connect him with the sacred figures of Hebrew history; there are striking parallels to the narratives of the birth of Isaac to Abraham and Sara (Gen., chaps. 18 and 21), of Samson to Manoah and his wife (Judg., chap. 13), of Samuel to Elkanah and Hanna (I Sam., chap. 1). Zacharias is a priest and bears the name of a famous prophet; his wife is "of the daughters of Aaron" and bears the name of Aaron's wife. Both are characterized by the completest piety, according to the Jewish ideal, "righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless." Both parents are advanced in years; this is twice (vss. 7 and 18) definitely stated, and Elizabeth is moreover distinctly declared to be barren (vs. 7).

Yet the angel Gabriel comes from heaven to announce a special intervention of God, a miraculous child-bearing on the part of the aged and barren mother. The name of the child is revealed in advance separately to Zacharias (vs. 13) and Elizabeth (vs. 60). Gabriel promises great things for the unborn John. Like Samson and Samuel he is to be a Nazirite, a devotee (vs. 15); i.e., he shall follow in the footsteps of the great ascetic prophets. But "many shall rejoice at his birth, . . . he shall be great in Jahweh's [Κυρίου] sight, . . . many of the children of Israel shall he turn unto Jahweh [Κύριον] their God. And he shall go before his [i.e., Jahweh's] face in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children [Mal. 4:5 f.] and the disobedient to walk in the wisdom of the just, to make ready for Jahweh [Κυρίῳ] a people prepared for him."

Here we have a very clear picture of the messianic expectation as it exists, e.g., in Malachi: the expectation of an anointed prophet who appears to prepare the way for Jahweh, who is himself to establish his kingdom. In other words, John is announced as the prophetic Messiah.

Further signs and wonders signalize his advent. His father is miraculously dumb for nine months (vs. 20) and miraculously restored to speech (vs. 64). His mother conceives miraculously; no virgin birth is suggested, but the aged and barren woman is made by the divine power to conceive. Justin understands the implication of the narrative (Trypho 84). "Even the barren, God, if he wills, can cause to bear. For Samuel's mother, being barren, brought forth by the will of God, and so too the wife of the holy patriarch Abraham, and Elizabeth, who bore John the Baptist, and other such. So that you must not suppose that it is impossible for God to do anything he wills."

Elizabeth "hid herself five months . . . and in the sixth month . . . the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, and she lifted up her voice with a loud cry and said, . . . My soul doth magnify the Lord" and the rest of the *Magnificat*. When John was born, and father and mother agreed on the unexpected name (Jochanan, gift of God's grace), when Zacharias' tongue was loosed, then "fear came on all that dwelt round about them, and all these sayings were noised abroad throughout all the hill-country of Judea. And all that heard them laid them up in their heart, saying: What then shall this be? For the hand of Jahweh [*Κυρίου*] was with him."

That all this is not written to serve a Christian purpose is evident. The whole conception of John as the great prophet going before the appearance of Jahweh himself, turning many of the children of Israel to Jahweh their God, is quite opposed to the view of the gospels that he goes before the appearance of Jesus the kingly Messiah. Prior to the time of Jesus there was expected *either* the anointed prophet preparing the way for the intervention of God, *or* the anointed King who should be God's representative, agent, and regent. Jesus, having both himself and John to account for, first held the conflate view of the prophet (John) going before the King (himself). That became the Christian view, but it was not the view of John or his followers, and it required an alteration of the text of Malachi to substantiate it, as is evident in Mark 1:2; Matt. 11:10; Luke 7:27.

John is "filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb" (vs. 15). It is interesting to note that this is never said of Jesus, Luke

himself describing the descent of the divine dove upon Jesus after the baptism (3:22), from which time he is "full of the Holy Spirit" (4:1).

That the *Magnificat* is originally the song of Elizabeth, not of Mary, has been abundantly demonstrated by Harnack, Burkitt, and others, and is clear both from the internal evidence of the context and the external evidence of MSS and patristic references. It must originally (in the Baptist source) have followed vs. 42a, "and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and said." When the Christian evangelist inserts vss. 42-45, the *καὶ εἶπεν* still refers to Elizabeth, but scribes who missed the original connection, and who naturally desired to honor the mother of Messiah, inevitably inserted *Μαριάμ*. This was not found necessary by the evangelist, who could let Elizabeth sing the *Magnificat* precisely as he let Zacharias sing the *Benedictus*, which makes far greater claims for the new-born child.

Like Elizabeth (vs. 42), so "Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied" (vs. 67), in statements far more striking than any which have preceded. "Blessed be Jahweh [*Κύριος*] the God of Israel, because he visited and wrought redemption for his people, and raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of David his servant." The succession of aorist verbs points to an event already accomplished; it is the birth of John. But the language is messianic; that God visited his people, that he wrought a redeeming for them, that he raised up for them a horn of salvation *in the house of David*, this can mean only that Messiah, the herald of salvation, is come.

The reference to the house of David suggests plainly that the boy John is somehow to be credited to the Davidic family, which seems to fit ill the son of a priest and a "daughter of Aaron." No doubt historically there would be difficulty, but that such a tradition could arise seems not impossible. There is a suggestion in the Old Testament that David was the progenitor of a priestly line as well as of a kingly line. In the Hebrew text of II Sam. 8:18 is made the statement: "And sons of David were priests." Which of the sons is not stated, but in I Kings 4:5, in a list of the "princes" at Solomon's court, we read in the Hebrew text that "Zabud the son of Nathan was priest, a friend of the king." The preceding clause states that Azariah, another son of Nathan, was over the officers. Most modern commentators assume that the Nathan here intended is Nathan the prophet, but, as Farrar protests, there is no reason for this assumption. The prophet is almost never mentioned without his title, and these court functionaries are more likely to be the

nephews of the King. In any case, a later reader could suppose David's son to be meant, which is all that is contended.

Houbigant and other older commentators rendered the Hebrew here: *Zabud filius Nathan sacerdotis*, making Nathan himself a priest. This is a mistaken rendering, yet it is the rendering of both the Syriac and the Arabic, and probably of the Targum. The Aramaic is perhaps ambiguous, but both Brian Walton and Poole render it: *Zabud filius Nathan sacerdotis*, Zabud son of the priest Nathan. A first-century reader of the Hebrew or hearer of the Targum might, therefore, understand that Nathan, David's son, was a priest, or, at the very least, that Zabud, David's grandson, was a priest. On this basis a popular legend might develop.

To be sure, the statement that sons of David, of the tribe of Judah, were priests, conflicted with the Levitical theory; later versions altered. The LXX of II Sam. 8:18 reads ἀρχαὶ, and the Targum *magnates*. Similarly most modern commentaries and translations; A.V. has "chief rulers," R.V. has "priests," with "chief ministers," in margin. H. P. Smith, *ad loc.*, properly insists that the word be taken in its original sense. In I Kings 4:5 the LXX omits the word "priest" entirely, though the Targum keeps it. Here, as in the other passage, modern commentators, if not disposed to regard the word as a gloss (so Cheyne), explain it as meaning some civil office. So already the Chronicler (I Chron. 18:17); the A.V. has (I Kings 4:5) "principal officer," though R.V. has "priest," with "chief minister" in margin. It is evident that the writer of Luke 1:69, who *must* have connected the son of the priest Zacharias somehow with the house of David, could have found his suggestion in these verses, or in a tradition based on these verses.

The question naturally arises whether there was any genealogy used by the Baptists to connect John with David. It is possible that the genealogy assigned by Luke (3:23-28) to Jesus, going back as it does to Nathan, son of David, was originally such a genealogy of John. It is not the composition of Luke, but is taken from some source: why not from the source which furnished most of the rest of chap. 3? There is nothing more remarkable in the existence of such a genealogy for John than for Jesus, or for the priest and prophet Ezra (II Esdras 1:1-3). It was a common Jewish form. If, as Luke 3:15 suggests (to say nothing of the Fourth Gospel), and patristic references attest, John was held by his followers to be Messiah, they *must* have connected him with David's line, according to the messianic dogmatic, despite their tradition of his priestly birth. The obvious means to this end is the con-

struction of a genealogy, and the Lukan genealogy is precisely such as would be constructed.

The Lukan genealogy is wholly different from Matthew's; it traces the line by unfamiliar names through Nathan to David, whereas Matthew traces it through the royal succession back to Solomon and David. The names in Matthew are taken from the Old Testament and the principle of kingly succession is clear, but no plan or principle has been discovered in Luke, or any source for its names, differing, as they do in the two exceptions from those of Matthew. Curious and fantastic hypotheses have been offered to explain the discrepancy, violent harmonizations have been attempted; these may still be seen in commentaries, but all are valueless attempts to make the best of a mystery.

May not the two, then, have been originally attempts to construct the lines of two different men? Is not the Lukan genealogy, obviously uninterested in the *Kingly* descent from David, in principle a *priestly and prophetic* line? Its first name, eliminating Jesus and his father,<sup>4</sup> is Eli, a priestly name, twice we have the name of Levi, the father of the priestly line; we have the prophetic names Amos and Nahum. The reduction of all the names to the Hebrew originals might cast some light on the character of the list. It is perhaps worth noting that we twice have "Matthat son of Levi," that we also have Mattathias son of Semein and Mattatha son of Nathan. Apparently the three similar names represent one Hebrew original. Now in Zech. 12:12 f. there is mention of four families of Jerusalem, the family of David, of Nathan, of Levi and of Shimei (Semein). This parallel collocation of names may be pure coincidence; in any case no significance can be attached to it. But may there not have been a tradition that made the descendants of Nathan a line of priests?

If Luke found in his Baptist source a Davidic genealogy of John, it would be only natural for him to change its point and make it the genealogy of Jesus, for he would see that it was meant as a proof of the messianic claim; it must therefore belong to the true Messiah, only wrongfully appropriated by one who was not Messiah. It is possible that Luke's statement of kinship between Mary and Elizabeth (1:36) may have some vague connection with this transfer. At least as early as Origen there were Christians who urged that Jesus was of Levitical, as well as of Judaic, descent, and Mary was often described as a Levite.

<sup>4</sup> It has always been a subject of remark that there fails before the name of Joseph the article *τοῦ* which every other name has, and elaborate theories have been built on this omission. Cf. the arrangement of the list in W.H.

This view, according to Judas Africanus, was based by some on the genealogies. Matthew was read as giving the kingly line from Judah, Luke apparently as giving the priestly line from Levi. That this results in a historical absurdity did not, of course, prevent the speculation. On the other hand, the prevailing view from the second century on was rather that expressed by the reading of *Syr. Sin.* in Luke 2:4: Joseph and Mary went up to Bethlehem to be enrolled, "because they were both of the house of David." This, despite Luke 1:36.

At any rate, whether there was in the Baptist source a Davidic genealogy of John or no (and the above discussion would only raise the question, not answer it), there was an early legend that connected him with Bethlehem and the royal line. In the second-century *Protevangelium Jacobi* it has always excited the wonder of readers that at the critical point of the story (22:3), when Herod is seeking the young child in Bethlehem to slay him, Jesus and his mother suddenly drop out of the narrative, which thenceforth concerns only John and his parents. "And Elizabeth, hearing that John is being sought, taking him, went up into the mountain-country, and was looking about to see where she might hide him. And Elizabeth, groaning with a great voice, said: Mountain of God, receive a mother with a child. And straightway the mountain was cleft and received her, and a light shone through to them, for an angel of Jahweh [Κυρίου] was with them, protecting them. And Herod was seeking John, and sent officers to Zacharias saying: Where did you hide your son? And he answered saying to them: I am a priest of God and tend the temple of Jahweh [Κυρίου]; I know not where my son is. And the officers went back and told Herod all this, and Herod, enraged, said: Your son is going to be King of Israel."

And so on to the end of the document, with the account of the murder of Zacharias because of John's escape, followed by wonderful miracles and the disappearance of the body. The story closes thus: "And after the three days the priests took counsel who should stand in his place, and the lot fell upon Simeon. For he it was who had been told by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death until he had seen [Jahweh's] Messiah in the flesh."

It is clear that this Johannine section of the *Protevangelium* is an insertion from another source. Elizabeth has previously been mentioned only once, and that far back in the text (12:2 f.). John has not been mentioned at all, nor his birth chronicled or even alluded to. Zacharias is named in Tischendorf's text of 8:3, but the MSS evidence is unfavorable, and the name is surely not original. A sentence in 10:2 concern-

ing Zacharias' dumbness interrupts the context and is manifestly an interpolation from the Johannine source. This Johannine source is clearly a Baptist product, written in the interest of devotion to John, and borrowed by the Christian writer.

The interesting question is raised whether Matthew may have known such a Baptist document, and appropriated for the story of Jesus some of its suggestions. In that case, Matthew's genealogy might be an attempt to outdo that offered for John. It goes back to Abraham, while that now in Luke, chap. 3, probably went back originally only to David, the names back to Adam and God being added by the evangelist. This would explain the inclusion of the name Cainan, given only in the LXX. It has even been argued (by Ludwig Conrady, *Die Quelle der kanonischen Kindheitsgeschichte Jesus*, 1900) that the *Protevangelium*, including the Johannine passages, was the source from which Matthew and Luke drew the material of their opening chapters. The true relationship is of course just the reverse; but in addition to Matthew and Luke, the *Protevangelium* used a Baptist document not the same as that used by Luke (and Matthew?). At least the absence of most of the specific elements of Luke's Johannine narrative would argue against the identity of the two documents. The existence, then, in the second century, of two such Baptist writings, with so rich a development of the tradition about John, posits the existence of a strong Baptist sect which cherished this tradition and put it into writing. And the tradition that John was born in Bethlehem and destined to be "king of Israel" attests the claim of Messiahship and of Davidic descent.

There was, furthermore, a considerable development of "apocryphal" literature concerning John and his father Zacharias. In the Stichometry of Nicephorus is listed a book "Of Zacharias the Father of John" of 500 *stichoi*. In 1895 A. Berendts published at Leipzig *Studien über Zacharias-Apokryphen und Zacharias-Legenden*, containing the text and translation of an old-Slavic Zacharias document. In 1904 the same author published *Die handschriftliche Ueberlieferung der Zacharias- und Johannes-Apokryphen*, in which he catalogues a very large number of Slavic manuscripts and different versions of the apocryphal story of Zacharias and his son. Two years later Berendts translated the old-Slavic version of Josephus' *Jewish War*,<sup>5</sup> containing several important passages concerning the Baptist and Jesus not in the familiar Greek text of Josephus. Those passages, Berendts believes, were written

<sup>5</sup> "Die Zeugnisse vom Christentum im slavischen *De bello judaico* des Josephus," *Texte und Untersuchungen*, Neue Folge, Bd. XIV, Heft 4, 1906.

by Josephus, in the original Hebrew (or Aramaic) edition of the work referred to in the first and second chapters of the Greek edition. In this view he has not received the support of other scholars. But the material to which Berendts draws attention, with the allusions in the Fathers, proves the early existence of a considerable literature devoted to the Baptist and his father. Whether any of this can be made to throw light on the New Testament statements is not as yet clear.

Returning to the *Benedictus*, the rest of its text (vss. 71-79) is as strongly messianic in its tone as the first verses. Vss. 76 f. are a clear statement of the function of the Anointed Prophet: "Thou shalt go before the face of Jahweh [Κυρίου] to prepare his ways, to give to his people knowledge of salvation in the forgiveness of sins." And so "the child grew and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his showing unto Israel." This word "showing" (ἀνάδειξίς, *hapax leg.*) really goes beyond the Christian idea of John. It is "manifestation," "proclamation," and is appropriate for the appearing of Messiah. In 2:40 the evangelist imitates this verse to make a statement concerning the youthful Jesus.

Other New Testament passages seem to offer less obvious points of connection. It has been suggested (by B. W. Bacon, in *Hastings' Dict. of the Bible*, II, 141) that the praise of Melchizedek as a type of Christ in Heb. 7:3, "without father, without mother, without genealogy" is a sort of protest against the tendency to find in considerations of descent and pedigree a support for Jesus' Messianic dignity. If there is protest in these words, it is as likely to be against Baptist genealogical claims. Such veiled polemic might be seen in other passages of Hebrews, e.g., in 6:1 f., "not laying again a foundation of *repentance* from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the teaching of *baptisms*, and of laying on of hands," or in 9:10, "being only (with meats and drinks and divers baptisms) carnal ordinances." Hebrews, like the Fourth Gospel, is Alexandrian in its view of the world, and one is tempted to find parallels of detail. But the context of these passages does not favor the anti-Baptist interpretation.

It is, however, of real significance that Josephus' *Antiquities* (XVIII, v, 2) has an extended and sympathetic note concerning John and his fate, but at most only a single passing allusion to Jesus (XX, ix, 1). The great honors paid to John in the early church also speak for a larger significance in his work than the explicit tradition records. "The Commemoration of his Nativity is one of the oldest feasts, if not the oldest feast, introduced into both the Greek and Latin liturgies to honor a



saint. . . . The whole liturgy of the day . . . was, in suggestiveness and beauty, on a par with the liturgy of Christmas" (Charles L. Souvay, in *Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. VIII, 1910, pp. 490 f.). John is the only Christian saint whose feast, like that of Jesus, is that of his nativity. Paul's is that of his conversion; all the rest are the day of death. John's nativity (June 24) was apparently well established as a festival by the year 400; Augustine's sermons give our oldest notices of it. At different times two other feasts in honor of John have been introduced into the church calendar, that of his Decollation (August 29), and that of his Conception (September 24).

As for the patristic evidence for the Baptists, Baldensperger has collected and presented it in suggestive form. Justin Martyr, who began his Christian life in Ephesus, knows a sect of Jews called Baptists (Trypho, 80). Hegesippus, a little later, gives a similar list of Jewish sects, including "Hemerobaptists" (Eus. IV, xxii, 7). These Hemerobaptists meet us again in the Apostolic Constitutions, in Epiphanius, in the Talmud, and elsewhere. The Clementine Homilies (II:23) speak of John as a Hemerobaptist, making the definite connection between this sect and his movement. The Clementine Recognitions (I:60) has this passage: "One of the disciples of John asserted that John was the Messiah, and not Jesus, inasmuch as Jesus himself declared that John was greater than all men and all prophets. If then, said he, he be greater than all, he must be held to be greater than Moses and than Jesus himself. But if he be the greatest of all, then must he be the Messiah." So Ephrem the Syrian knows the Baptists, and reports: "The disciples of John also boast of John and declare him to be greater than Christ, who himself testified saying: He is not greater."

Finally, Mr. G. Margoliouth, in his notable article "The Sadducean Christians of Damascus," in the *Academy* for November 26, 1910, argues that the Jewish Christians to whom he attributes the origin of the so-called "Zadokite document" recently edited by Dr. Schechter from a Hebrew manuscript found in the Genizah at Cairo, recognized in John the Baptist the Messiah sprung from the house of Aaron. But since, according to Margoliouth's view, they were Christians, also recognizing Jesus as Messiah, it is difficult to connect them with the "Baptists" of the early tradition; the hypothesis of Christian origin for the document is, moreover, as yet so little acceptable to students that nothing can be built on it.

We have found indications that John, like Jesus, was proclaimed Messiah by his followers after his death, though he had never claimed the

title in his own preaching. Like Jesus again, he was declared of wonderful birth in Bethlehem, of Davidic lineage. Like Jesus, he was hailed by the people as a prophet, and stigmatized as devil-possessed by his enemies. Like Jesus, he died as a martyr to the truth he preached, and was believed to have risen from the dead. Like Jesus, he was the subject of the written word, chronicling his story and his message. His followers were disciples, taught in the way of the Lord, who believed and were baptized; they prayed their Master's prayer and sent abroad apostles to spread his teachings.

Here are rival Messiahs. To the Christians John becomes, in the literal sense of the word, an Antichrist, *ἀντίχριστος*, an imitation, pretended Christ, a parody of Messiah. The only New Testament writer who pens the word "antichrist" is the author of the Fourth Gospel, in the epistle in which he sets over against one who came "in water only" Jesus the Messiah "that came by water and blood."

This paper has been concerned only to recall attention to the *data* actually offered by the New Testament, and to raise the question whether the implication of these *data* does not favor the hypothesis of Baldensperger. As we look back at the years 29 and 30 of our era, through the medium of a Christian tradition, of course Jesus looms so large as quite to overshadow all others. Beside the light of the world, the rays of a candle, though it be "burning and shining," glimmer but feebly. This is the correct perspective of history. But to his contemporaries did not John send forth a brighter and a broader beam? Jesus, the Evangelists, Josephus, and the extra-canonical Christian tradition seem to answer: Yes.

CLAYTON RAYMOND BOWEN

MEADVILLE THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL  
MEADVILLE, PA.

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### IS BELIEF IN THE HISTORICITY OF JESUS INDISPENSABLE TO CHRISTIAN FAITH?

In the October number of this *Journal* Professor Mathews offers some critical comments upon my article which appeared under the above caption in the July number. In offering a brief rejoinder may I be permitted to remind the reader of my hearty agreement with my critic in several important matters? Not only are we at one as to the necessity of affirming on historico-critical grounds the real historicity of Jesus, and as to the unique revelation-value of his person and work; no more is there any real issue between us as to the pedagogical value of having